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SERVICE DATE - DECEMBER 15, 2000

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NO. AB-290 (SUB-NO.209X)

**CAMP LEJEUNE RAILROAD COMPANY - PETITION FOR EXEMPTION -
DISCONTINUANCE OF OPERATIONS - BETWEEN CAMP LEJEUNE AND MARINE
JCT. IN ONSLOW COUNTY, NC**

BACKGROUND

In this proceeding, the Camp Lejeune Railroad (CL) has filed a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to discontinue operations on approximately 5.5 miles of railroad between Milepost CK-2.5 near Camp Lejeune and Milepost CK-8.0 near Marine Jct., North Carolina. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the exemption becomes effective, the railroad will be able to discontinue service on the line.

History of the Line

The CL line was constructed by the U.S. Government in 1954. The line extends from the Camp Lejeune industrial area to a point of connection with the Atlantic and East Carolina Railway Company at Havelock, NC, approximately 27.2 miles and later near Jacksonville, for a total of approximately 35.7 miles.

The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) in Finance Docket No. 21297, Southern Railway Company-Control-Camp Lejeune Railroad Company, served May 23, 1961, initially denied the Camp Lejeune Railroad Company's petition for authority to lease the line. In Finance Docket No. 30553, Camp Lejeune Railroad Company - Lease Exemption, 1984 ICC LEXIS 297, dated September 11, 1984, the ICC granted the Camp Lejeune Railroad Company's application to lease and operate the line of railroad owned by the United States, Department of the Navy. CL has been advised that the line was never operated by the US government or any of its departments or agencies as a common carrier.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The railroad has submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the discontinuance of

service. The railroad has served the environmental report on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Board's environmental rules at 49 CFR 1105.7(b). We have investigated the record in this proceeding. Also, we have contacted appropriate agencies and individuals to verify the railroad's report and to obtain additional information and comments regarding the potential environmental effects of the proposed discontinuance. Contacts have included North Carolina Department of Natural Resources, North Carolina State Historical Society, National Park Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, North Carolina Coastal Zone Management, North Carolina Department of Transportation, City of Onslow, US Senate, US Congress, North Carolina General Assembly, City of Jacksonville, Eastern Rulene Sales, North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources, National Geodetic Survey and U.S. Department of the Navy.

Traffic

No freight service has originated or terminated on the CL since June 1999. Twenty-six carloads terminated on the line in 1998. There are two relatively recent shippers on the line, Barrus Concrete dba APAC Carolina, Inc. and Eastern Rulene. Eastern Rulene states that it will not be affected by CL's discontinuance of service. However, Barrus Concrete states that they need continued rail service. Barrus' spur track is in disrepair and cannot be used. Barrus has used trucks as an alternative mode for shipping its commodities.

CL's lease of the property expired in August 1999 and CL ceased serving the line at about that time. Since the line's owner, the US Navy, desires return of the property for other public purposes, the lease will not be renewed.

Salvage

CL leases the right-of-way and does not own it. CL will not remove any rail or perform salvage operations. It is CL's intention to return the property to the U.S. Navy, as requested.

Future Land Use

CL states that the U.S. Navy intends to allow use of the right-of-way by the City of Jacksonville, NC and the North Carolina Department of Transportation for a rail trail, commercial development and street improvements.

CONDITIONS

We recommend that no environmental conditions be placed on any decision granting discontinuance authority.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, discontinuance of service on the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed discontinuance would include denial (and, therefore, no change in operations) or continued operation by another operator. In this case, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, send an **original and two copies** Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, Room 711, Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Phillis Johnson-Ball who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No.209X) in all correspondence addressed to the Commission.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Phillis Johnson-Ball at (202) 565-1530.

Date made available to the public: December 15, 2000.

Comment due date: January 16, 2001.

By the Board, Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

MAP TO BE SCANNED